

The logo for the Salton Sea Authority features a stylized wavy line above the text "Salton Sea Authority" and another stylized wavy line below it.

*Salton Sea Authority*

**Work Plan for  
Assessment of  
Recreation and Local Economic Opportunities**

**Salton Sea Ecosystem Management Program**

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**8 February 2005**

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## INTRODUCTION

The Salton Sea Authority (Authority) has been tasked to conduct an assessment of recreation and local economic opportunities. This assessment will focus on recreation and local economic opportunities associated with alternatives that will be considered in the Programmatic Environmental Impact Report (PEIR) that is currently under preparation. This document provides the Authority's proposed approach, schedule and budget to conduct these analyses. The proposed work program includes two tasks that the Authority considers to be critical to the successful completion of the assessment of recreation and local economic opportunities. The Authority's work schedule will have key milestones that meet the State's requirements for preparation of the PEIR.

This Work Plan outlines the specific work activities that will be necessary to evaluate the protection of recreational values and the enhancement of local economic development opportunities surrounding the Salton Sea in association with the ecosystem management plans being analyzed as part of the PEIR. The work is to be conducted in consultation with the Resources Secretary's Salton Sea Advisory Committee (SSAC) and in close coordination with the Department of Water Resources (Department) and the Department of Fish and Game (DFG) staff.

Various economic and recreational committees have been formed over the past several years to assess opportunities at the Salton Sea, and several assessments of economic and recreation opportunities have been completed. These efforts have included the work of the Salton Sea Authority Economic Development Task Force, which commissioned the Rose Institute Report (1999), the Citizen's Advisory Committee that reviewed the US Filter proposal in 2003 and the Outdoor Recreation Advisory Task Force that was formed in February 2004 and provided their report later that year. In meetings with these groups, three factors have consistently been identified as the critical for future economic development:

- Improvement of water quality, including control and reduction of salinity;
- Stabilization of the water surface elevation; and
- Reduction of odors

Numerous recreational facilities and opportunities for recreation and economic development currently exist around the Sea. However, many facilities are under-used and have fallen into disrepair because of poor water quality and the associated odors that often occur around the Sea. The current effort will build upon the assumption that alternatives under consideration will improve water quality and reduce odors.

Salton Sea Authority will provide the Department a recreation and economic needs/requirements assessment with specific components of the recreation and economic assessment ranked according to:

- "Must have" (replacement of current recreation facilities or for current economic activity);
- "Nice to have" (replacement for what previously existed at the Sea); and
- "Great to have" (substantial improvement over existing and recent use) criteria.

In this manner, the needs/requirements list and priority rank can be integrated into each alternative when available and the infrastructure information associated with each feature can be integrated into other resources assessments (such as transportation, land use, air quality, growth, etc.) much sooner.

## APPROACH TO WORK

The scope of work to be performed is divided into two separate and distinct tasks as described below. Tasks 1 and 2 were included in the Department's scope of work and the approach described below will be designed to complete all required elements and meet the mandated schedule milestones.

Task 1 is the identification of specific recreational activities, user areas, facilities, services, and other amenities (plus needed justification/supporting information) that can be considered during the Ecosystem Management Plan alternative development process. The recreational needs identified would focus on the protection and possible enhancement of the recreational values the Sea currently provides.

Task 2 involves assessing the potential for local economic development opportunities associated with restoration of the Salton Sea ecosystem, regardless of the restoration alternative considered. Both tasks will be carried out in a manner that maximizes local public involvement.

## TASK 1 – DEVELOP RECREATION PLANS

The Authority will develop a prioritized list of specific recreational activities, user areas, facilities, services, and other amenities, consistent with the ecosystem management focus of the program, that address protection and possible enhancement of recreation values surrounding the Salton Sea. The specific recreation needs, along with supporting details and data concerning technical, economic, social, and environmental factors associated with possible implementation, will be considered for inclusion in specific alternatives being developed as part of the Ecosystem Management Plan PEIR. Recreational conditions without the project will be discussed as a point of comparison. A cost analysis and financing plan is to be prepared for each facility, service, or amenity proposed.

As part of a strategic approach to recreation planning for the Sea, the following three overarching questions will be addressed for each proposed facility:

1. Where are we now? What facilities and services are available at present and do they fulfill the identified needs of the region?
2. Where would we like to be? What facilities and services are required to meet the needs of the region?
3. How are we going to get there? How are these facilities and services to be provided in the future and who is responsible for providing and managing them?

In February 2004, the Salton Sea Authority appointed an Outdoor Recreation Advisory Task Force to evaluate recreational potential of a restored Salton Sea and present recommendations to the board. Outdoor Recreation Advisory Committee presented their report to the Salton Sea Authority Board of Directors on June 24, 2004 and their report was included as an appendix to the Authority's Preferred Project Report. In their report, the Committee discussed the following issues:

- Fiscal benefits of ecosystem improvements, including those to recreation amenities, those concerned with increased travel to the area, and those associated with new temporary jobs (construction) and permanent employment
- New industries resulting from, or made possible by, ecosystem improvements

- Potential public revenues, including sales, property, state and federal income, and transient occupancy taxes
- Consequences of failure to restore the Sea, including both environmental and economic impacts
- Economic feasibility of ecosystem improvements, including identification and quantification of potential funding sources

This Committee's work may serve as a starting point for the new analysis.

### **Subtasks**

The Authority will implement the following subtasks as part of the development of strategic recreation plans for protection and possible enhancement of the recreational values of the Sea. These subtasks will involve conducting several public meetings and considerable public input and discussion to achieve "ownership" of the prioritized list of recreational activities, user areas and facilities. The work will include the following subtasks identified in the Department's Scope of Work.

#### ***Subtask 1a – Identify Recreational Priorities***

The first step of the process will be to identify a priority listing of facilities, land uses, or activities that the local community "must have", finds "nice to have", or would be "great to have". Key stakeholder groups will be consulted in regard to recreation at the Sea to help develop these priorities into a set of principles or overarching goals to drive the recreation planning process.

Recreational opportunities have been identified by past efforts, including the efforts of the Outdoor Recreational Task Force in early 2004. Its members included John Benson, Victor Torres, Lea Anne O'Malley, Shirley Palmer, Christine Harris, Sue Giller, Bill Gates, Tim Kelley, Cliff Lawrence, Leon Lesicka, Roland Gaebert, Chris Schoneman, Jack Crayon, Vince Signorotti, Wayne Olesh, Jacob Ward, Fred Singh, Al Kalin, Jack Hart and Tom Raftican. Lea Anne O'Malley was appointed chairwoman. The membership of this group will be reviewed with the Department as a starting point for the advisory group for the current task. Adjustments may be made to the constituency based on availability, willingness to participate and other factors.

It is proposed that two sets of two meetings be held, for a total of four meetings. Each set of meetings would be held at two locations...at the northern and southern ends of the Sea. The first set of meetings would be planning sessions with the committee members to review recreational priorities. The second set of meetings would be to review the draft report with the committee. Both sets of meetings would be open to the public.

***Deliverables:*** Agendas and minutes from the planning sessions and public meetings

***Completion Date:*** July 1, 2005

#### ***Subtask 1b – Issues Affecting Future Direction***

The Authority will research and analyze the issues that are likely to influence the future direction and scope of the recreation plans including the number, size, and location of facilities, regional need, partnerships for financing, construction, operating and maintaining the facilities, and assessing local and regional attitudes regarding the plan.

***Deliverables:*** Interim memo documenting results

***Completion Date:*** April 1, 2005

**Subtask 1c – Prepare Conceptual Recreation Plans**

The Authority will prepare a conceptual prioritized list of recreational activities, user areas and facilities reflecting the values and desires of various stakeholders, vet the list through the consultation with public interest groups as discussed for Subtask 1a, and present the list to the SSAC for its review. The list, along with supporting information, will include descriptions of recreational features, potential usage projections and projected value per visitor-day per facility, and conceptual maps indicating the locations of recreational opportunities around the Sea.

**Deliverables:** Conceptual Recreation Needs Report

**Completion Date:** July 1, 2005 (draft); August 31, 2005 (final)

**Subtask 1d – Implementation Strategies**

Once conceptual recreation needs have been identified, the Authority will outline the key steps needed and strategies for implementing the proposal including identifying responsibilities, timing and resources required for implementing the strategies.

**Deliverables:** Implementation Plan

**Completion Date:** July 1, 2005 (draft); August 31, 2005 (final)

**Deliverables**

Specific deliverables will be prepared for each subtask as indicated above. In general, the final recreation report will consist of a detailed description of each proposal recreation need or facility type, supporting data and information including documentation of public consultation and opportunities for input, and a layout of any proposed facilities or improvements and particular siting requirements for each facility type such as size of the area, shoreling access or utilization, parking needs, utilities required, and anticipated visitor use, etc. Production formats for all work products will be coordinated with the Department and will be consistent with Department requirements.

**TASK 2 – CREATE IMPROVED LOCAL ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES**

The Authority will develop plans in sufficient detail, and consistent with the ecosystem management focus of the program, that addresses the opportunities for spurring local economic conditions surrounding the Sea. A prioritized list of conceptual economic improvement proposals and supporting information will be prepared that could be included as part of alternatives being considered in the PEIR. At a minimum, each proposed economic improvement will need to document the potential to create and/or augment opportunities for local economic growth and discuss the opportunities each proposal provides in terms of a stimulus to the local economy.

Criteria will be developed to evaluate whether the proposals being analyzed will, in fact, provide a stimulus to the local economy. Conceptual economic development projects will reflect the values and desires of various stakeholder and diverse interest groups. Projects will be listed by

priority (e.g., “must have” “nice to have” and “great to have”). The final report will identify the economic opportunity from project construction and ongoing O&M, recreation development and eco-tourism, attraction of industries (geothermal, gaming, enterprise zone – define these and what is required to attract them), and other economic stimulus projects, plus the characteristics of land economic incentives Sea condition and population.

The plans also will be thoroughly vetted through public meetings to provide input from various public interest groups and the local community. It is expected that two public meetings will be held to review draft plans, one at the north end of the Sea and one at the south end. Draft conceptual plans/recommendations for improving the local economic outlook will be submitted to the SSAC for its review and input.

### **Subtasks**

The work will include the following subtasks identified in the Department's Scope of Work.

#### ***Subtask 2a – Local Economic Base Analysis***

The Authority will begin by preparing an economic base analysis that will provide a description of how the local economy functions. The local boundaries of the area to be studied will coincide with the legal boundaries of the Salton Sea tax increment financing district. The economic base analysis will include a description of the relationship the Sea plays in driving that economy. Tax base data compiled for the Authority's recent analysis of potential financing options will be incorporated into the analysis. Information from other past socioeconomic analyses of the Salton Sea region will also be used in evaluating the economic baseline.

As part of the analysis, updated local socioeconomic multipliers will be generated through use of the Department of Commerce Bureau of Economic Analysis's Regional Input-Output Modeling System (RIMS II). RIMS II generates output, earnings, and/or employment multipliers for any region composed of one or more counties and for any industry, or group of industries, in the national I-O table. The multipliers can be used to estimate the total impact of a project or program on regional output, earnings, and /or employment. Two sets of multipliers were obtained from RIMS II, one set for Imperial County and the other for Riverside County.

***Deliverables:*** Economic Base Analysis

***Completion Date:*** July 1, 2005 (draft); August 31, 2005 (final)

#### ***Subtask 2b – Develop Criteria for Economic Stimulus Assessment and Identify Economic Opportunities***

This subtask will involve preparing descriptions of opportunities for creating local jobs that, in turn, can provide economic stimulus. In the short term, jobs will be created by project-related construction and operation opportunities. In the longer term, jobs will be created by the economic stimulus of improved conditions at the Sea. Both types of opportunities will be discussed and evaluated.

***Deliverables:*** Interim memo documenting results

***Completion Date:*** July 1, 2005 (draft); with August 31, 2005 (final)

#### ***Subtask 2c – Identify External Economic Opportunities***

The Authority will analyze export promotion opportunities, the development and attraction of industries that serve external customers or draw in external dollars. In the 1950s and 1960s,

the Salton Sea was a thriving tourist destination, in attracting millions of visitors each year to the area. Past economic analyses have made forecasts of the external dollars that may be attracted by improved conditions at the Sea. The Authority will review previous projects and develop new projections of economic growth that can be evaluated as part of the Salton Sea Ecosystem Management Plan PEIR.

**Deliverables:** Interim memo documenting results

**Completion Date:** July 1, 2005

#### ***Subtask 2d – Import Substitution Analysis***

The economic analysis will include an analysis of import substitution, the ability of individuals to "recycle" external or export dollars to expand the local economy. The analysis will, in part, be based on the RIMS II results generated in Subtask 2a which will provide the economic multipliers to be used for this subtask.

**Deliverables:** Interim memo documenting results

**Completion Date:** July 1, 2005

#### ***Subtask 2e – Local Economic Functions Analysis***

For the final subtask, the Authority will describe specific plans for augmenting the local economy through the use of fee-based recreation facilities, the creation of business/enterprise zones, local community development, or other proposals that provide local economic stimulus. As discussed above, two public meetings are planned to review draft plans.

**Deliverables:** Local Economic Opportunities Report; agendas and minutes from the planning sessions and public meetings

**Completion Date:** July 1, 2005 (draft); August 31, 2005 (final)

### **Deliverables**

Specific deliverables will be prepared for each subtask as indicated above. The final economic opportunities report will consist of a detailed description of the various plans and proposals, including supporting data and information such as public consultation and opportunities for input, and a map and layout of any proposed facilities or improvements. Production formats for all work products will be coordinated with the Department and will be consistent with Department requirements.